तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Krishna Will Give You Guru

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Prabhupada: The best friend is the spiritual master because he saves one from the blazing fire of confusion.

O'Grady: The problem is to find this spiritual master.

Prabhupada: No, there is no problem. The problem is if you are sincere. ... You have got problems, but God is within your heart. *īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe arjuna tiṣṭhati* [Bg. 18.61]. God is not far away. God is within your heart. So if you are sincere, then God will give you a spiritual master.

O'Grady: Thank you. That I know.

Prabhupada: Therefore God is called *caitya-guru*, the spiritual master within the heart. And the physical spiritual master is God's mercy. If God sees that you are sincere He will give you a spiritual master who can give you protection. He will help you from within and without, without in the physical form of spiritual master, and within as the spiritual master within the heart. That is stated,

> *īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati*
> *bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā*
>
> The Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, O Arjuna, and is directing the wanderings of all living entities, who are seated as on a machine, made of the material energy. [Bg. 18.61]

The body is just like a machine, the spirit soul is sitting on this machine, and God is there within the heart. He is giving the direction, "You wanted to do this. Now you go and do it." So if you are sincere, "Now, God, I want You," then He will give you directions, "You go and get it." This is the process. But if we want something else than God, then God will give you direction, "You go and take it." He's very kind. *Īśvaraḥ sarva*... I want to have something and He is within my heart, and He is giving me direction, "Yes, you come here. You take this." So if that God can give you indication, "You go and take this," then why not the spiritual master? First of all we must be eager to again revive our God consciousness. Then God will give us the spiritual master. ♧

— Room Conversation with the Irish poet Desmond O'Grady, Rome, 23 May 1974. Published in The Science of Self Realization, chapter 7. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles.

Service of the Truth

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Truth can never be served by the faculty that diverges from the Lord. The service of truth is the function of the soul. It is incapable of

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being diverted from the truth. It is causeless and uninterruptible. Truth is identical with the teacher of the truth. There can be no knowledge of the conclusions of the Vedas without undeviating service at the lotus feet of Sri Gurudeva. No one can be the teacher of the truth except the devotee of God. This is not the dogma of irrational orthodoxy. It is the real truth. One cannot be guru although he be descended from the highest lineage, be initiated in all sacrifices, having studied the thousand and one branches of the Veda, if he is not a true *vaiṣṇava*.

— *Shri Chaitanya's Teachings*, page 31.

The Activities of a Ghost

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Oh, stupid mind, why have you come to this material world? Having achieved this rare human birth, if you won't do *hari-bhajana* then are you actually a human being? You are not a human being. *mānuṣākāra hoile ki haya koro bhūta kara* — You may have gotten the body of a human being, but your activities are those of a ghost. Otherwise why are you not uttering the name of Sri Krishna Govinda? A ghost cannot utter Krishna's names. You have gotten a human body but if you are not uttering the name of Sri Krishna Govinda then your activities are like that of a ghost.

You can teach a parrot to chant, "Krishna, Krishna." A parrot can utter. But you are not uttering. You are so lazy! Why are you so lazy? Why are you not uttering the holy name, *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*? Don't become lazy. Get up early in the morning, 3:00 am, 4:00 am. What time are you getting up? A quarter to four? Lazy fellow! Get up at 3:00 – 3:30 am. Take bath immediately and then come to the temple. Chant, *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*, then the purpose of your human birth is achieved. Why are you becoming lazy? Not getting up early and not engaging yourself in *bhajana*. What sort of activity is that? The activity of a ghost. Yes, definitely. All day and night, 24 hours, simply chattering, chattering, chattering like monkeys. Only speaking about so many nasty things, politics or topics concerning sense gratification. "That war will come..." "What will you do?" "... this and that." Simply chattering, chattering like monkeys. Can't you utter, "Govinda", "Hari", "Krishna"?

— From a lecture in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. 1 May 1995.

Flight of the Crow

The following story told by Salya to Karna from the forty-first chapter of the *Karna-parva* of *Mahābharata* nicely illustrates the dangers of pride.

There once lived a wealthy *vaiśya* by the side of the ocean. He performed many sacrifices and gave generously in charity. He was quiet, observant of the duties of his order, and was pure in his habits and mind. The *vaiśya* had a number of sons all of whom were pious and kind to all living creatures. Living in a place that was ruled over by a pious king, the *vaiśya* was peaceful and free from anxiety.

There was a crow that daily came to the home of the *vaiśya* to feast on remnants of the family's food that the children gave him. After eating every day the opulent milk, puddings, yogurt, honey, butter and other foods, the crow became very arrogant and began to think little of all other birds.

One day, some great white swans, who were practically equal to Garuda in terms of speed and range of flight, came to the shore of the ocean. When the sons of the *vaiśya* saw the wonderful swans, they jokingly told the crow, "O ranger of the sky, you are superior to all of these big birds."

Intoxicated with arrogance and false pride, the crow considered these words to be true. That foolish crow then challenged the leader of the swans, saying, "Let us have a flying competition to see who is the best."

Hearing the words of the arrogant crow, those swans began to laugh. Those foremost of birds, capable of flying anywhere at will, said to the crow, "We are swans who live on the Manasa Lake. We traverse all over the earth, and amongst winged creatures we are always spoken highly of for the length of distances we fly. How can a crow like you hope to compete with a swan?"

The crow replied, "Great as I am, I tell you, that before your eyes, I shall fly for hundreds of *yojanas* (a *yojana* is eight miles) displaying a hundred and one varieties of motions in flight. Rising up, swooping down, whirling around, going straight, proceeding gently, going backwards, darting forward, moving with great velocity I shall display my great strength and expertise in flight."

One of the swans said, "O crow, you may fly in a hundred and one different ways. I however, shall fly in only one way, which is the way all other birds know. For I do not know any other. O you of red eyes, you may fly as you like."

Hearing this, all of the crows that had gathered there laughed and said, "Now we will see our brother crow defeat the swans."

The crow and swan then rose into the sky, the swan flying in a simple straight motion and the crow making many elaborate movements. Seeing the variety of styles of flight he was exhibiting, all of the assembled crows were filled with delight and began to caw loudly.

For a moment it appeared that the crow had defeated the swan, then suddenly, with great velocity, the swan began to fly westwards towards the ocean. After following him for some time out to sea, the crow could no longer see any land or trees, and he became afraid. He thought, "When I become tired, where shall I rest on this vast ocean? The water is immeasurably deep and is inhabited by hundreds of monsters who will devour me."

Covering a great distance in one moment, the swan looked back to see how the crow was faring. Seeing him far behind, exhausted, and barely able to stay above the water, the swan felt pity and went to his aid. The swan said, "O crow, what is the name of this special flight which you are exhibiting now? You are repeatedly touching the water with your wings and beak."

Unable to see the limit of the ocean, and greatly fatigued by having flown so far, the crow replied, "O revered sir, we are crows. We move about here and there crying, 'Caw! Caw! Caw!' O swan, I seek refuge in you and place my life in your hands. Please take me back to the land." Speaking thus, the crow suddenly fell exhausted into the ocean.

Seeing him fallen, with a sorry heart the swan addressed the crow who was on the verge of death, "O crow, how is it that you were previously praising yourself so loudly? Remember, you said that you would fly in a hundred and one different ways. How is it that you have become so tired and have fallen into the water?"

Overcome with weakness, the crow pleaded with the swan, "Eating the remnants of the family's opulent foods, I thought myself equal to Garuda and did not care for the crows or any other birds. I now seek refuge with you and place my life at your disposal. Please take me to the land and save me from this calamity."

Without a word, the swan picked up the crow, placed him on his back, and began flying back to the land. Nearly at the point of death, deprived of his senses, drenched with water, trembling in fear, and hideous to look at, the melancholy crow was weeping. The swan speedily restored the crow back to the land where they had originally started. Placing him gently on the ground and comforting him, the swan then quickly flew away to return to Manasa Lake.

[Salya then told Karna that just as that crow fed upon the remnants of the *vaiśya* children, became proud, and thus disrespected his equals and superiors, similarly, living on the remnants of Dhritarashtra's sons, Karna had become proud and thought himself fit to fight with Krishna and Arjuna.]

Sometimes it is seen that after becoming uplifted by receiving the mercy of great personalities, some *kāka-janas*, crow-like persons, become proud and forget the color of their feathers. After having a little association with swan-like *parama-haṁsa* devotees, they begin to consider themselves far superior to their peers and perhaps even equal to the *parama-haṁsas*. Instead of *anusāra*, following the instructions of the Lord's dear devotees, they take up the cheap practice of *anukāra*, imitation. By taking shelter of swan-like persons we may cross the ocean of birth and death, but if we try to imitate them we will certainly fall down into the ocean and drown.

Bhaktivinode Thakur sings:

garhita ācāre, rohilāma moji',
nā korinu sādhu-saṅga

lo'ye sādhu-veśa, āne upadeśi,
e boḍo māyāra raṅga

Remaining absorbed in abominable activities, I never really kept company with *sādhus*. Now I adopt the dress of a *sādhu* and act out the role of instructing others. This is *māyā's* big joke.

Conceit is a great stumbling block on the path of devotion. In the *Bhāgavad-gītā* (16.4), Krishna describes pride as a demoniac quality:

dambho darpo 'bhimānaś ca krodhaḥ pāruṣyam eva ca
ajñānaṁ cābhijātasya pārtha sampadam āsurīm

Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance—these qualities belong to those of demoniac nature, O son of Pritha.

Nārada Purāṇa (1.7.15) describes:

ahaṅkāro mahān jajñe māsūyo lobha-hetukaḥ

Pride is the cause of destruction of all wealth, the source of false ego and all types of failure.

Suffering from the troubles caused by trying to compete, the crow finally had no other recourse then to give up his pretension and take shelter of the swan. Similarly, if we find ourselves in such a situation our only hope is to take shelter of the *parama-haṁsas*. In *Vraja-vilāsa-stava*, text 1, Srila Raghunath Das Goswami has compared our spiritual pursuits to travelling on a road where one is beset with thieves. Like the crow that was nearing death and cried out to the swan, Raghunath Das says that our only hope is to call out to the swan-like devotees of the Lord:

pratiṣṭhā-rajjubhir baddhaṁ kāmādyair vartma-pattibhiḥ
chitvā tāḥ saṁharantas tān aghāreḥ pāntu māṁ bhaṭāḥ

The highwaymen of lust, greed, and anger have captured me and bound me with the ropes of the desire for fame. I pray that the heroic devotees of Lord Krishna, the enemy of the Agha demon, may defeat my captors and cut the ropes that bind me.

Srila Sanatan Goswami has advised us of the benefits of humility:

yenāsādharaṇāśaktā-dhama-buddhiḥ sadātmani
sarvotkarṣānvite 'pi syād buddhais tad dainyam iṣyate

Even if one is very exalted, he should be humble and think himself very incompetent and lowly.

yayā vācehayā dainyaṁ matyā ca sthairyam eti tat
tāṁ yatnena bhajed vidvāṁs tad-viruddhāni varjayet

A wise man should try to be humble in his words, deeds, and thoughts. He should shun whatever is opposed to humility.

dainyaṁ tu paramaṁ premṇaḥ paripākeṇa janyate
tāsāṁ gokula-nārīṇām iva kṛṣṇa-viyogataḥ

Humbleness comes from advancement in love for Krishna, as is seen in the example of the women of Gokul when they were separated from Krishna.

paripākeṇa dainyasya premājasraṁ vitanyate
parasparaṁ tayor itthaṁ kārya-kāraṇatekṣyate

Mature humbleness brings love for Krishna. It is seen that the two are in a relationship of cause and effect. — 2.5.221-225.

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